

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION	FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM MANUAL	
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401.1 Purpose

This section describes:

- A. The policy and procedure to apply when screening a household for expedited Food Supplement Program (FSP) benefits, and
- B. The expedited processing standard.

401.2 Expedited Service Criteria

If otherwise eligible, the following households must receive expedited service within 7 calendar days:

- A. Households with less than \$150 gross monthly income and who have \$100 or less in liquid resources.
- B. Households whose combined gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage and utilities, including entitlement to the SUA or LUA, as appropriate.
- C. Migrant or seasonal farmworker households who are destitute (see Section 122, Migrants), and have liquid resources that do not exceed \$100.

401.3 Identifying Households Requiring Service

- A. Every local office must set up a procedure for all FSP applicants to identify those households eligible for expedited service. This includes the FSP only and combined FSP and Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)/Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP) applications filed in person, by mail or fax, or electronically.
- B. The procedure must also establish a method to identify entitlement to expedited service on the same day that a household seek assistance.

401.4 Screening for Expedited Service

- A. Households that meet expedited service eligibility criteria as defined in Section 401.2 must be given expedited FSP benefits. Screening is the process of determining which households are potentially eligible for expedited services.
- B. The local department is required to:
 - 1. Assist the household with completing the application if assistance is requested;

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401.4 Screening for Expedited Service (continued)

2. Assist the household in obtaining the correct information regarding income and expenses within the expedited timeframe (7 days from the date the application is filed); and
 3. Accept the household's best estimate and document clearly the household's estimates if the information regarding income and expenses cannot be obtained within the expedited timeframe.
- C. When screening is completed, document clearly the following information:
1. The household's circumstances;
 2. The eligibility decision (expedited service or normal processing); and
 3. The reason for the decision.
- D. Verification.
1. All households found eligible for expedited service **must provide verification of identity**. This does not have to be a photo ID. If necessary, the local department may make a collateral contact to verify identity. Example: For a customer who states that he stayed the previous night in a particular homeless shelter or hospital but does not have any proof of identity, the case manager must make every effort to contact the shelter or hospital in an attempt to verify his identity.
 2. The case manager will use the applicant's statement as to the amount of income, assets and deductions in determining the benefit amount if verification is not available.

401.5 Expedited Service Standard

- A. The local department must give eligible households the "opportunity to participate" on or before the 7th day for expedited cases. "Opportunity to participate" means the household has access to benefits (households must have their EBT card and have been trained in its use).

According to federal guidance, the household is considered to have the opportunity to participate 24 hours after the case manager notifies the customer by phone, or in person, or 3 days after the customer is notified by mail. It is important to narrate when a case manager notifies a customer of his or her eligibility at the interview or by phone.

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401.5 Expedited Service Standard (continued)

B. If there are intervening weekends or holidays, the procedure is as follows:

1. When the seventh calendar day is Saturday or Sunday, finalize the case the previous Thursday to ensure that benefits are available on Friday.
2. When the seventh calendar day is a holiday that falls on Monday finalize the case on the previous Thursday to ensure that benefits are available on Friday.
3. When the seventh calendar day is a holiday that falls on Friday finalize the case on the previous Wednesday to ensure that benefits are available on Thursday.

C. Households that apply for FSP benefits after the 15th of the month and are eligible for expedited benefits are entitled to FSP for the initial month and the second month without additional verification requirements. FSP benefits for the 3rd month may not be issued until all postponed verification is received.

Reminder: If the customer is applying for FSP benefits and has an ongoing associated case the case manager may have to enter program specific verification codes to prevent the closure of the ongoing case when FSP benefit verification is pending.

401.6 Interviews

- A. An interview is required before expedited FSP benefits can be issued.
- B. As part of the interview, the interviewer must explore and resolve with the household any unclear or questionable information. The interviewer must conduct the interview as an official and confidential discussion of household circumstances and protect the applicant's privacy.
- C. Unless waived for a hardship reason, households must have a face-to-face interview with a case manager at initial certification and at least every 12 months after that. If waived for a hardship reason, the case manager must conduct a telephone interview.

Note: The case manager must complete Option O (Interview) during or shortly after the interview to prevent CARES from sending an inappropriate notice of missed interview.

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401.6 Interviews (continued)

- D. If a household is entitled to expedited service and is also entitled to a waiver of the office interview the LDSS must conduct a telephone interview and complete the application process within the expedited time frame.
- E. The calendar day after the filing date is the first day of the count. The application, for filing date purposes only, may be page one of the signed DHR/FIA CARES 9700 or the 9711 (Assistance Request Form) or the date local department receives the SAIL application and signature page.

401.7 Telephone Interview

- A. **Do not count** the mailing days toward the seven-day count if a telephone interview is conducted and the application is mailed to the household for signature. The application must be **mailed the same day** the telephone interview is conducted.
- B. For **expedited processing** only, mailing days means any days the application is in the mail to and from the household. Mailing days **include** any **days the application is in the household's possession** before being returned to the local department.

401.8 Special Procedures for Expediting

- A. Use the following procedures to provide expedited service to potentially eligible households:
 1. Verify the applicant's identity through collateral contact or readily available documentary evidence if the household is unable to provide verification.
 2. Make reasonable efforts to verify (within the 7-day expedited service timeframe) the household's residency and income. **Do not delay** expedited service to households who are otherwise eligible if they **cannot verify residency or income** within the **expedited service timeframe**.

NOTE: The local department may also verify residency and income provided that the verification process is within the expedited service timeframe.

3. Complete the work registration for the applicant (unless the individual is exempt or the household has designated an authorized representative to apply on its behalf).

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401.8 Special Procedures for Expediting (continued)

NOTE: Attempt to register for work all other non-exempt household members. The local department may attempt to verify questionable work registration exemption claims by the household. However, postpone such verification if the expedited service timeframe cannot be met.

4. The household is responsible for providing the necessary verifications for expedited service. However, the local department must assist the household in obtaining the necessary verification if requested.
5. Assign a normal certification period to households that are certified on an expedited basis and have provided all normal verifications as described in Section 408 (Verification) of this manual.

NOTE: The local department may assign a **one-month certification** period to households that are certified on an expedited basis and **do not provide all normal verification. Require a new application** in instances where a one-month certification period is assigned. In addition, the local department will **provide a notice of eligibility and a notice of expiration** to the household at the same time.

6. There is no limit to the number of times a household can be certified under expedited procedures, as long as prior to each expedited certification, the household:
 - (a) Has completed the verification requirements that were postponed at the last expedited certification; or
 - (b) Was certified under normal processing standards since the last expedited certification.
7. Process the application of a household requesting, but not eligible for expedited service, according to normal processing standards (see Section 406, Normal Processing Standards).
- B. A signed application, filed electronically, is to be screened for expedited eligibility. If the required verification as described in Section 408.A is provided FSP benefits are to be issued within the seven day processing standard.

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401.9 Expedited Food Supplement Program Benefits – Questions and Answers

Question 1. What verification does the applicant have to provide before I can issue expedited benefits?

Answer 1. The case manager must obtain verification of the identity of the person applying **through any readily available documentation or through collateral contact prior to issuing expedited FSP benefits.** There is no requirement that the verification be a picture ID.

Question 2. We have to issue expedited benefits the day after application or no later than 7 days after application. What if there is not enough time to interview the applicant on the day of application or during the 7-day period after the application filing date?

Answer 2. The household must have a face-to-face interview in order to receive expedited benefits. A face-to-face interview may be waived in favor of a telephone interview for hardship situations. Some hardship reasons include no transportation, work or training hours, or illness.

Question 3. In the interview the applicant stated he had signed a waiver of a FSP administrative disqualification hearing two months ago. It was the first violation. He is the only person in the household. He meets expedited service criteria. Should I issue him expedited FSP benefits?

Answer 3. No. He is not eligible for FSP benefits for 12 months because of his IPV disqualification period. Note: The disqualification should be on CARES and in the nationwide electronic Disqualification Recipient System (e-DRS).

Question 4. We have issued expedited benefits based on the household's statement of income, expenses and resources. The only verification we have is of identity. How long does a household that received expedited service have to provide other required verification?

Answer 4. For households that apply for FSP benefits before the 15th of the month the household has until the end of the application month to provide verification. You cannot issue the second month's benefits without mandatory verification.

Customers applying for FSP benefits after the 15th of the month and who are eligible for expedited FSP benefits have until the end of the ongoing month to provide required verification. When verification is postponed, the 3rd month's issuance cannot be made until the local department receives the postponed verification.

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401.9 Expedited Food Supplement Program Benefits – Questions and Answers (continued)

Example: Ms. S lost her job in November and applies for FSP benefits on December 18. She meets the expedited service criteria and is eligible for expedited FSP benefits. She verified her identity with her driver's license, but did not have verification of income or resources or shelter costs (optional verification). The local department must issue Ms. S's December (prorated) FSP benefits so that she can get them the next day or no later than 7 days after she filed her application. She will also receive January benefits issued during the regular EBT benefit issuance, even though she has not provided outstanding verification.

Question 5. What do I do if the household drops off an application and does not stay for an interview?

Answer 5. The local department must make every effort to screen all drop-off applications for expedited service before the applicant leaves. At that time the person assigned to this job should ask for any documentation that would verify identity. The customer must be given a scheduled appointment for an interview. It is also helpful to get a phone number where the applicant can be reached.

Reminder: To schedule an interview through CARES go to the MISC screen. Enter the EW ID, enter "INT" in the Appt. Type field, and enter the date and time of the interview. CARES will generate a notice to the household.

Question 6. What happens if we don't have verification of identity, but it appears that the household is potentially entitled to expedited service?

Answer 6. Generally, this should happen only if the customer has mailed, faxed, sent the application as an e-mail attachment or submitted a SAIL application. If the household's identity cannot be verified within the expedited time frame, the household cannot receive expedited service. The local department must continue to assist the household to obtain the necessary verification so that the household's application can be processed as soon as possible but within 30 days. If the application includes a telephone number, the case manager should try to contact the applicant by phone to request the verification. If there is no phone number, the local department should schedule an interview appointment.

Question 7. How often can someone get expedited FSP benefits?

Answer 7. There is no limit to the number of times a household can be certified under expedited service policy as long as prior to each expedited certification, the household either:

- Provides verification that was postponed at the last expedited certification, or
- Was certified under normal processing standards since the last expedited certification.

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401.9 Expedited Food Supplement Program Benefits – Questions and Answers (continued)

Question 8. Can someone get expedited service at recertification?

Answer 8. If the household applies before the end of its current certification period, the expedited service policy does not apply. If the household reapplies after the expiration of the certification period, the household must be screened for expedited service.

Example: Ms. A did not get a notice that the redetermination was due. She did not realize her certification period had expired June 30 until she went to the food store in July and found that her benefits were not available. She reapplied July 6th. The local department determined that she was eligible for expedited service and issued her FSP benefits July 7th under expedited processing procedures. Since this was an agency error, the household would get FSP benefits back to the 1st of the month.